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13 FEB 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT: Complementary Studies of the Soviet Venture in
Cuba, 1962

1. Attached are complementary studies reconstructing the Soviet venture in Cuba in 1962: Cuba 1962: Khrushchev's Miscalculated Risk, prepared by the [redacted] Office of Research and Reports (ORR), and The Soviet Missile Base Venture in Cuba, prepared by the DD/I [redacted]

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2. The two studies concentrate on different bodies of information and emphasize different aspects of the venture. Most of the ORR study is devoted to examining, on an all-source basis, the known, hard facts relevant to the military buildup. It relies heavily thereafter on the implications of this evidence to support its principal conclusions on questions raised by this Soviet action. The study by the DD/I [redacted] on the other hand, examines the venture in the context of Soviet foreign policy, especially the record of Soviet confrontation with the United States. It emphasizes the Soviet reading of the American antagonist at all stages of the venture and attempts to discover why Khrushchev believed, until late in the venture, that the United States would not react militarily.

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3. Because of these differences, the studies vary greatly in the amount of consideration given to similar aspects of the venture. Whereas the ORR study discusses the hard facts of the military buildup in great detail, the study by the DD/I [redacted] presents them only briefly and relies primarily on the ORR study for these facts. Conversely the study by the DD/I [redacted] discusses in detail the political background of the missile base venture, probable Soviet objectives as suggested by this background, and the USSR's political management of the venture throughout its course -- aspects which the ORR study discusses only briefly.

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4. Working from different bodies of information and along different lines, the studies reach many common conclusions, with respect to both principal and secondary conclusions. Moreover, the conclusions which each reaches separately are compatible with the other's conclusions, although there are differences on a few matters of detail. Among the common conclusions are the following:

a. The Soviet approach to Cuba was marked initially by caution;

b. Developments in 1961 (the Bay of Pigs affair, the Vienna talks, the Berlin Wall, and so on), however, encouraged Khrushchev to believe that in the event missiles were deployed in Cuba the risk of U.S. military action against either the USSR or Cuba would be low;

c. Impelled by his felt need to redress the strategic and political balance of power and to acquire a stronger position for future negotiations, Khrushchev decided on the Cuban venture in early 1962;

d. The way in which the buildup was carried out (the concurrent deployment of defensive and offensive systems, the failure to conceal or camouflage the development of strategic missile sites, the shipping in of the missiles after the President's warnings of early September, and the failure to bring systems to an operational status as rapidly as possible) suggests that the Soviet authorities believed that the risk of a U.S. military reaction was low; and

e. When the full extent of the miscalculation was realized, Khrushchev, recognizing his inferior tactical and strategic position, was first concerned with preventing an escalation of the crisis and, when persuaded that U.S. resolve was firm, withdrew the "offensive" weapons while attempting to salvage as much as possible of the Soviet military presence in Cuba.

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5. Insofar as the OHR study draws its facts from hard evidence [redacted] it probably can be regarded as definitive. Insofar as both studies deal with matters of opinion (the OHR study in part, the study by the DD/I [redacted] in greatest part), neither purports to supply final answers. We believe, however, that the studies together give the best existing account of all facets of the missile base venture -- the OHR study in its detailed examination of the Soviet military buildup and the study by the DD/I [redacted] in its detailed consideration of background, motivation, and political management.

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6. We propose to distribute these studies to a fairly wide audience both inside CIA and outside CIA. We propose also to send them in one package to many of the recipients. Many others on our distribution lists, however, probably will require only one or the other.

[redacted] has been prepared for a very few persons at the top levels of the Administration -- for example, Mr. McGeorge Bundy and Mr. Robert F. Kennedy -- who were dealing with [redacted] during the Cuban crisis, who supplied some of that material for this reconstruction, and who have expressed an interest in the finished study. Attached is a draft memorandum for possible transmission of the [redacted] OSSI study to this select group.

OTTO S. GURNE
Assistant Director
Research and Reports

Enclosures:
As stated

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Enclosure to

18 February 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR:

SUBJECT: Complementary Studies of the Soviet Venture in
Cuba, 1962

1. Attached are complementary studies -- both prepared by components of our Directorate of Intelligence -- reconstructing the Soviet venture in Cuba in 1962: (a) Cuba 1962: Khrushchev's Miscalculated Risk, and (b) The Soviet Missile Base Venture in Cuba.

2. The two studies concentrate on different bodies of information and emphasize different aspects of the venture. The first is devoted mainly to examining the hard facts of the military buildup, on which it bases its conclusions. The other emphasizes the Soviet reading of the American antagonist at all stages of the venture, and tries especially to answer the question of why Khrushchev thought he could get away with it.

3. I think that you will find things of interest to you in both papers -- facts and conjectures which may help you to fill in your own picture of those developments in 1962. Some of these things may be useful in any compilation of the lessons to be learned from that Soviet venture.